

Services Division

Committee on China

Committee Minutes - 158th Meeting - 21 January 1958

D/S Representatives:

Guests:

25X1A9a

The Committee discussed the following:

1. Peking Radio announced on 7 January the opening for trial traffic of a 3500 foot temporary rail bridge over the Yellow River between T'ung-kuan and Feng-ling-tu.

JIB(M) Comment: Construction of the new bridge and approaches to replace the former passenger ferry will link the improved Tai-Yuan - Feng-ling-tu line to the Lunghai Railway, thus providing an additional north-south trunk route in North China. The new bridge will have major strategic significance as a link between Northwest and Northeast China.

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2. The Chinese Communists have announced that some 100 km of track will be laid on the Trans-Sinkiang Railroad in 1958. OFFICIAL USE

Comment: Such a low goal for 1958 will make completion of the more than 1300 km remaining on this line impossible before 1960. The figure indicates that the priority given the construction of this line before 1957 has been assigned elsewhere with the effect that petroleum and non-ferrous prospecting and mining activities in this region adjacent to the USSR will be retarded.

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S/CST, x 4597

3. [REDACTED] referred to an N.C.N.A. broadcast of 11 November which discussed the development of heavy industry in Lan-chou and referred to the manufacture in the U.S.S.R. of equipment for synthetic rubber plants to be installed in the Lan-chou area.

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[REDACTED] This suggests that the "Lan-chou Rubber Plant" will produce synthetic rubber. It may be designed to use by-products from the Lan-chou oil refinery which is due to start operations early in 1959. Other plants described as synthetic rubber factories are planned for Kirin and for Ch'ang-shou at which latter place a factory associated

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with calcium carbide and caustic soda plants is planned to commence operation late in 1953. Chinese Communist usage of the term "synthetic rubber" is not clear and this term may include some types of plastics. ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ORR Comment: Chinese sources have indicated that the Chang-shou chemical factory in Szechwan will be gradually expanded into a plant capable of producing a kind of synthetic rubber called neoprene. In China, neoprene, an oil resistant material, is presumably made from chlorine and acetylene and the latter, in turn, is derived from calcium carbide. Thus, it can be safely assumed that the synthetic rubber plant to be located in Kirin, which has a large calcium carbide plant, may also produce neoprene and/or butadiene.

The presence of Chinese chemists at the Sumgait Synthetic Rubber Plant, near Baku, U.S.S.R., indicates that either one or both of the two production techniques planned for use in the Russian plant may be used in the Lan-chou plant. At Sumgait, in one shop, gas from the Baku refineries is broken down to make ethyl alcohol which is used, in turn, to produce synthetic rubber. In another shop a more direct method is used by turning butane (from the refineries) via butylene into synthetic rubber. The existence of the large Lan-chou refinery tends to support the assumption that the Chinese will adopt one of these Soviet techniques. **OFFICIAL USE**

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Agenda:

23 January - Mr. [REDACTED], A/F, will discuss the "Gross National Product of Communist China" Room 1121, Building M at 1400.

Note: A copy of the China Committee Annual Report for 1957 has been attached to the 'minutes' for 21 January.

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RR/S/TF: [REDACTED]:jd/2749 (21 January 1953)

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